

**Claims after this response:**

1(Previously amended). A protective covering comprising:

a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said absorbent layer being bonded to said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet, said absorbent layer being divided into a plurality of cells for containing liquid within the boundaries of said cells, said liquid being prevented from moving between said cells.

2(Original). The protective covering of Claim 1, wherein said absorbent layer comprises paper.

3(Original). The protective covering of Claim 1, wherein said absorbent layer comprises an open cell foam.

4(Original). The protective covering of Claim 3, wherein said foam is electrostatically charged.

5(Original). The protective covering of Claim 1, wherein said absorbent layer comprises a fibrous mat.

6(Original). The protective covering of Claim 5, wherein said fibrous mat is electrostatically charged.

7(Original). The protective covering of Claim 1, wherein said absorbent layer comprises a plurality of hydrophobic barriers, said hydrophobic barriers defining said cells.

8(Previously amended). The protective covering of Claim 1 further comprising a hydrophobic layer bonded to said top surface of said absorbent layer, said hydrophobic layer

having a plurality of pores therethrough, said pores allowing liquid to penetrate said hydrophobic layer and be absorbed by said absorbent layer.

- 9. (Canceled)
- 10. (Canceled)
- 11. (Canceled)
- 12. (Canceled)
- 13. (Canceled)
- 14. (Canceled)
- 15. (Canceled)
- 16. (Canceled)
- 17. (Canceled)
- 18. (Canceled)
- 19.(Canceled)
- 20(.Canceled)

21(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

\_\_\_\_\_ a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

\_\_\_\_\_ an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet,

wherein said absorbent layer comprises an open cell foam.

22(Previously amended). The protective covering of Claim 21, wherein said foam is electrostatically charged.

23(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

\_\_\_\_\_ a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

\_\_\_\_\_ an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said  
absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet,  
wherein said absorbent layer comprises a fibrous mat.

24(Previously amended). The protective covering of Claim 23, wherein said fibrous mat is electrostatically charged.

25(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

\_\_\_\_\_ a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

\_\_\_\_\_ an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said  
absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet,  
wherein said absorbent layer comprises a plurality of hydrophobic barriers, said hydrophobic barriers defining a plurality of cells for containing liquid within the boundaries of said cells, said liquid being prevented from moving between said cells by said barriers.

26(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

\_\_\_\_\_ a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

\_\_\_\_\_ an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said  
absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet,  
wherein said absorbent layer further comprises a hydrophobic layer bonded to said top surface of said absorbent layer, said hydrophobic layer having a plurality of pores therethrough, said

pores allowing liquid to penetrate said hydrophobic layer and be absorbed by said absorbent layer.

27(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet, wherein said electrostatically charged layer is bonded to said absorbent layer.

28(Currently amended). ~~The protective covering of Claim 19A~~ protective covering for protecting an exposed surface:

a water-impermeable electrostatically charged sheet having a top and bottom surface;  
and

an absorbent layer having top and bottom surfaces, said bottom surface of said absorbent layer being in contact with said top surface of said electrostatically charged sheet, wherein said absorbent layer is divided into a plurality of cells for containing liquid by liquid impermeable barriers that prevent liquid from moving from one cell to another.